



Transportation and Regional Growth Study



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What is the TRG Study?

- **Five-year comprehensive study on Minnesota transportation and regional growth issues.**
- **Interdisciplinary team addressed six major components, coordinated by University of Minnesota's Center for Transportation Studies.**
- **Sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the Metropolitan Council with support from the Minnesota Local Road Research Board.**
- **Sixteen research reports provide objective information, with the goal to gain knowledge and understanding, not to advance specific public policies.**
- **Summary report synthesizes findings for public education and for offering leaders and professionals policy themes and strategies.**



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Why was it done?

Because of what's at stake in state transportation and land development decisions

- **Minnesota's economic competitiveness**
- **Minnesota's quality of life**

Because of increasing questions and debate about the impact of transportation on development

- **Causes of sprawl**
- **Role of transit and automobile transportation**



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Current Situation



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Minnesota stands at a crossroads

- **Rapid growth continues at edges of metropolitan area**
- **Commutes longer than 40 minutes are up 32% since 1990.**
- **Travel delays will double over the next 20 years.**
- **The state deficit demands more efficient use of scarce resources.**



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What did we learn?

- **The Twin Cities metropolitan area now comprises 19-24 counties, not 7 counties.**
- **Current state and regional policies have encouraged low-density, spread-out development.**
- **Congestion is a symptom, not the problem. While it can be seen as a sign of growth and success, the negative impacts require us to understand its cause.**
- **The problem is a system in which transportation and land use decisions were made with little reference to each other, or to how they would impact the region in the long term.**
- **The types of past suburban land use decisions require a car-centered transportation system, with few options for alternatives.**



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What did we learn?

- **While growth shows vitality, it has created negative environmental impacts, including growing endangerment of one of the state's basic resources: clean water.**
- **There are similar impacts of transportation and land development on thriving regional centers throughout Minnesota.**
- **More transit and more roads are not, by themselves, viable solutions. There is no "silver bullet."**
- **Transit is no cure for congestion, but is successful in serving activity-rich destinations—such as the University of Minnesota and the two downtowns.**
- **Residential land use has little importance in determining whether a commuter chooses transit—destinations drive transit decisions.**



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What did we learn?

- People care more about the *time* they spend traveling than the actual *distance*. Only when their commute gets longer than their “time budget,” will people consider changing where they live or work.
- People spend 20-25 minutes commuting (one-way) to work on average and 70-75 minutes total travel time per day—this holds true since the 1950s and in a variety of cities.
- The full costs of transportation in the metro region for 1998 were \$27 billion, categorized by internal costs, government costs, and external costs.
- Most of the costs are internal (84%) and are paid by users themselves. Since these costs are primarily for auto travel, this indicates people perceive high benefits from using this mode of transportation.



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What did we learn?

- **Although users pay significant costs, the governmental costs (9%) and external costs (7%) of a car-centered system are growing rapidly.**
- **Forecasted transportation revenue collected by current funding mechanisms will not be enough to meet the government costs of transportation in the next 25 years.**
- **Transit can be beneficial because it reduces external costs imposed by car travel (pollution, congestion, etc.) as well as offering travel choices.**



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Where do we go from here?



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Full Cost Pricing

More Market Choices



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Where do we go from here?

Full Cost Pricing:

- **70% of road-related revenues collected for the Twin Cities road system are unrelated to how much system users travel. Road pricing should be transparent to users.**
- **Potential home buyers and commercial developers should pay the full costs of infrastructure development.**
- **Full cost pricing lets the market work, leading to better decisions and more efficient use of resources.**



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Fixed Revenues

state aids to local government

local property taxes

motor vehicle registration taxes



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Where do we go from here?

More market choices:

- **Gearing policies to accommodate trends already evident in the marketplace is the best way to see faster and more durable results. Current trends point towards downtown-like development.**
- **Market-oriented planning and zoning that encourages activity-rich destinations (employment, shopping, entertainment, etc.) creates possibilities for transportation choices.**
- **Destination centers should be served by a combination of improved roads, expanded bus service and carefully implanted commuter and light rail lines.**



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Where do we go from here?



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Policymakers have a new resource to guide transportation and regional-growth policy now and in the future:

The Transportation and Regional Growth Study

www.cts.umn.edu/trg